

# THE OGUNQUIT BREEZE

A MONTHLY EMAIL NEWSLETTER FOR THE COMMUNITY  
FROM THE OGUNQUIT RESIDENTS ALLIANCE

## Town News

### Town Elections: Seat Openings

- Two on Select Board
- Two on Budget Review Committee
- One on School Board
- One on Sewer District

**April 14th** Deadline for nomination papers, citizen petitions and draft ordinances

**April 18th** Select Board finalizes warrant articles

**Earth Day Town Clean-up** sponsored by Conservation Commission April 22nd: watch Town website for details

[Stewardship Workday at Old Boston Preserve](#) April 26th

[Perennials and Pollinators Gardening Talk](#) on Zoom April 27th

## Update on Town Buildings

At the March 28th meeting, the Select Board voted to support the unanimous decision by the Budget Review Committee to place a **bond** proposal on the June 13th ballot for up to **\$11,935,000** with these revised funding details:

- \$60,000 **demolition** the Old Village School
- \$9,275,500 **construction** of a new Town hall and police station
- \$2,432,000 **renovation** of the Dunaway as a community center (Since \$132,000 was previously allocated for structural improvements to the Dunaway, a lesser amount, \$2,300,000, would be bonded)
- \$300,000 towards playground, basketball court and grounds

The project is estimated to add \$245 (0.00048%) each year for the next 30 years to **residential taxes** for a property valued at \$500K.

Additional funds to complete the Dunaway project and site work will be sought through grants and donations.

## CONTENTS

- Town News
- \$12 million bond proposal
- Thank you to Budget Review
- Diana Allen: Science Educator
- Bacteria: Harmful *and* Helpful
- Planning Board Approves Demolition and Expansion to Historic Town Building

Mark  
YOUR  
Calendar

**Main Beach Parking  
Lot will be closed  
all day Saturday,  
June 10th**

**Note: Town-Owned Building** at 102 Main Street (formerly Arts Ogunquit) rented to Chamber of Commerce as of April

## Highlighting Extraordinary Volunteers

Thank  
you!

To the superb commitment of the  
**Budget Review Committee**  
for their diligence and teamwork on the  
2023-2024 Town budget!



Left to Right: Peter Griswold (Secretary), Fred Lynk (Chair), Peter Kahn (Vice Chair), Michelle Tourangeau (Member), and Michael Collins (Member)

# Faces and Places

## Diana Allen: Science Educator

At the time you are reading this, Ogunquit's very own Diana Allen (currently the Maine State finalist for the Presidential Award for Science Teaching) will be presenting "Connected Learning Eco-Systems" at The National Science Teachers Association Conference in Atlanta, sponsored by NASA and The Gulf of Maine Research Institute.

Even more notable for us is that, each day, she teaches 160 middle school kids in Sanford the wonders of science.

Her students are fortunate to have her as, at 16 years of age, after years of struggle and unhappiness, Diana dropped out of high school! Luckily, she discovered the Job Corps where she thrived, leaving with a culinary certificate and her high school diploma. After a degree and a couple of challenging years as a new teacher, Diana came to the notice of the Sanford Junior High School principal (now the Mayor) who offered her a permanent science teaching role. And for the past 19 years, she has been engaging and building lives with the kids through uncovering the magic of science.



Diana's professional commitment to education and the environment extends far beyond the classroom. She is a member and past President of Maine Science Teachers Association, was appointed to the Maine Agriculture in the Classroom Council, volunteered for Marine Mammals of Maine where she was on call to rescue seals, and was a Wells-Ogunquit School Board member for 5 years where she was head of the Finance Committee.

Her most recent accomplishments were authoring legislation that has provided two million dollars in grant funding for climate change education in our schools, and a State finalist for the Presidential Award. She is waiting to find out if she will be chosen. Don't we wish we could be one of her students?



*Gulf of Maine tank and two aquaponic tanks in the classroom*



*Blue Nile Tilapia fish used for aquaponics*

Her classroom was once a 2,200 square foot garage, with an 18 x 30 greenhouse attached, formerly part of the Sanford Regional Technical Center.

Now it is home for her science classes, a 1,000 gallon aquaponic system and a 250 gallon saltwater tank that models the Gulf of Maine tidal pools containing many organisms such as sea urchins and crabs...and we haven't even mentioned her Madagascar hissing cockroaches!



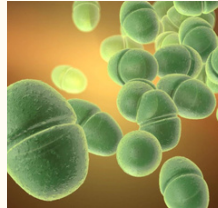
*Above: Aquaponic grown plants (left of image) and soil grown plants (right of image)*

# Natural Resources

## Bacteria: Harmful *and* Helpful

When we hear a high **enterococci count** from Maine Healthy Beaches during the summer, we shudder. The thought of dog poop, leaking sewer pipes and septic tanks, and stormwater sweeping everything from the Town's sloping streets and from neighboring streams into the estuary is not a pleasant one.

One of the family of enterococci strep bacteria, *Enterococcus faecalis*, is used as a marker for contamination of coastal swimming areas. It is found in the intestinal tract in most mammals and healthy humans but can cause mild to serious illness elsewhere in the body.



When found in the water, it also signals the presence of other pathogens like viruses and parasites that die off faster, and, at lower levels, are expensive to detect and quantify.

Enterococcus and other "**fecal indicator bacteria**" can also sometimes be present naturally in the environment without an obvious or recent source of contamination. Without better understanding of these conditions, decisions are made to protect public health because of the proven close association with human illness.

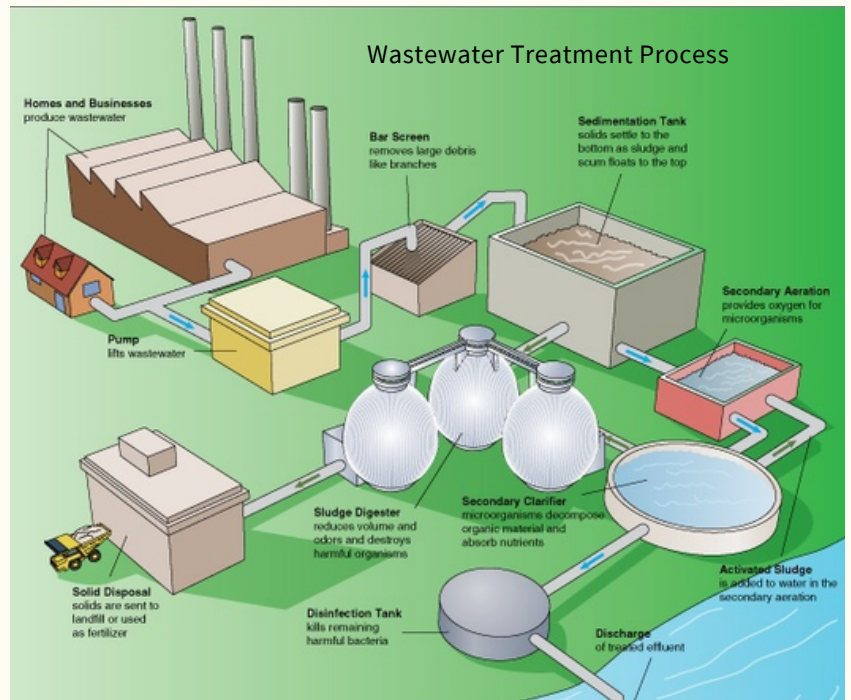
On the other hand, **bacteria and other micro-organisms** play an accommodating role in wastewater treatment (sewage). According to the American Society of Microbiologists, "Despite its long and pivotal role in our (indoor plumbing) success, once wastewater is done swirling down our toilet bowls, most of us are blissfully unaware of what happens next. It may not come as a surprise that microbes are heroes of this untold story."

The ultimate goal in sewage treatment is to purify it enough to restore it to the environment. The treated liquid (effluent) is discharged into rivers or, in the case of Ogunquit, a half-mile out into the ocean; the solid portion is carted off to landfills.

The bulk of our wastewater follows a process called activated sludge with four basic steps: filtration, activation (aeration), clarification (settling) and disinfection. Activation is where both aerobic and anaerobic organisms play their part.

After passing through filtration, the aerobic bacteria in the sludge (those needing oxygen) are encouraged to grow and reproduce through aeration (by stirring or bubbling). Both types of organisms digest the organic material and change the chemical makeup of the sludge, oxidizing ammonia into nitrate and nitrite which is less toxic to fish.

Up to 28 individual types of bacteria have been documented, but the most abundant only represent a small percentage (about 3%). Keeping the aeration process on track involves testing samples for the amount of dissolved oxygen and the amount of types of **indicator bacteria, such as enterococci and E. coli** (*Escherichia coli*).



Once this sludge has been processed by bacteria, it is called activated sludge, which can refer to both the material itself and the waste management process. If you've been following the news in Maine regarding a link between PFAS ("forever chemicals") and sludge, legislation has restricted deposits to secure landfills. Reducing the amount of sludge produced is an ongoing challenge for treatment plants.

### Find out about Green Crabs



Hear the report by Suzanne Willians and Jane Greene from Healthy Rivers Ogunquit (HeRO) on their study of invasive green crabs last summer. Watch it on [March 1st](#) at 10 minutes

Stay informed with Ogunquit Sewer District Newsletters and their [Website!](#)



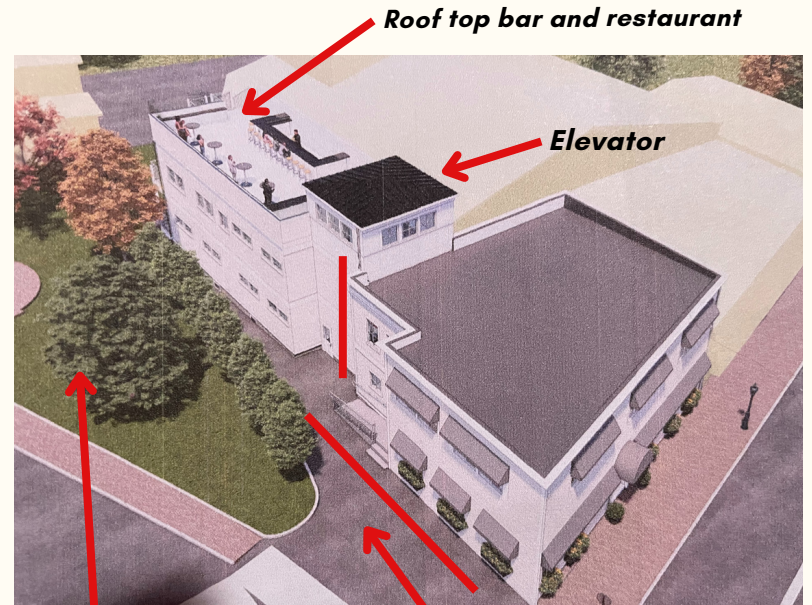
# Planning Board Approves A Huge Restaurant Expansion in Town Center

Watch [February 27th meeting](#)

The existing part of the building to be torn down is one story high, **624 square feet** in size, between 14-16 feet wide, and 42 feet long. The proposed structure will be three stories high, 64'x23' in size, come within 4 feet of Veteran's Park for its entire length, and take up **1,472 square feet**. This more than doubles the size of the footprint and increases the volume of the building **5-6 times!** The expansion also adds room for +/-100 more patrons.



*Proposed building demolition and extension*



*Historic backdrop from building next door*



*Current Location: Perkins Block (1907)*

- Why did the Planning Board **RUSH** to approve a plan that will have long term consequences on the quality of life in Town without practicing the due diligence that it's empowered to do?
- Why did the Planning Board ignore the fact that the proposed plans indicating the **enormous increase in the size** of the building was inappropriate for its location?
- Why **didn't** the Planning Board schedule **a site visit** due to the fact that the proposed "addition" would dwarf and overwhelm all existing properties in the vicinity?
- Why was there **no impact study done** of the potential noise, traffic and crowding associated with this expansion?
- What kind of effect will this demolition and expansion have on the **character of the Town center?**

